

The Library Assistant

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL
OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS
(SECTION OF THE LIBRARY
:: ASSOCIATION) ::

HON. EDITOR: A. C. JONES
WARRINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Vol. XLIV, No. 9
November, 1951

A.A.L. Publications

WITH this issue is distributed a leaflet giving details of the very considerable number of A.A.L. publications now in print. We hold strongly to the belief that no student—especially of librarianship—can work efficiently without at least a nucleus of textbooks of his own—books which are always there at his elbow when he needs them, and from which he can learn not only the rudiments of his craft but also the elements of “bookmanship,” in its highest and most rewarding sense. We recognise the truth in the saying that “borrowers do not belong to the inner circle of book-lovers,” though it is not perhaps a text which we would choose to display prominently in our lending libraries. Librarians *should* belong to that inner circle, and the tools of their trade should be among the first to be acquired. The recognition of this simple need might well be the touchstone by which truly professional librarians may be distinguished from their clerical counterparts.

The publishing policy of this association is based on the assumption that students will buy their own basic textbooks. That is why everything possible is done to keep down publication costs to a level within their reach. The format of our Primer series, for example, is strictly utilitarian, and we believe that students prefer it that way. We hope that libraries will buy our publications too—for staff collections, where they will be used by “first-year” students still feeling their way, and by senior members of the staff who rightly wish to keep in touch with the studies of their juniors. But it has never been our intention that students should queue up for the one or two copies of Phillips in the staff library, thus rendering them inaccessible to those who have a more legitimate need. It has never been our intention that libraries should buy multiple copies of such publications in an attempt to satisfy the needs of their staffs—though we acknowledge the generosity of those few who have attempted to do so.

We are not commercial publishers; an incredible amount of time and energy is given freely by a large number of unselfish people in order to provide the publications which the student needs, at a price which he can afford. The only return they get is the satisfaction of seeing their work bearing fruit. And so it is not surprising that they get a little hot under the

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

collar when they find so many would-be librarians preferring an evening at the pictures to a copy of the *A.A.L. guide*; preferring to wait for someone else to finish with Hewitt rather than invest 5s. in a copy—even though the delay and inconvenience might make all the difference between knowing and guessing, passing and failing.

No Entrance or Registration student can afford to be without the *A.A.L. guide*. It is worth 20 marks at a conservative estimate, and that is less than 3d. a mark! The fact that there are still a few copies unsold may be not unrelated to the low percentage of passes in recent examinations. Let us hope that next year things may be a little different.

Forthcoming Publications.

This is perhaps an appropriate moment to say something of our plans for the future. The *Primer of assistance to readers*, published this month, and the new edition of Phillips, due in a few weeks, are the first fruits of an ambitious programme of new publications, most of which will appear during 1952. The next will be volume two of the *A.A.L. guide*, edited by Dr. A. J. Walford, covering the Final examination. There are to be a number of additions to the *Primer* series, including *Cataloguing* by Miss D. M. Norris, *Historical bibliography* by N. E. Binns, *Bibliography* by K. A. Mallaber, and *Work with young people* by a committee under the chairmanship of Miss E. H. Colwell. In another field we are hoping to publish a much needed *Subject guide to fiction*, edited by G. B. Cotton, which seems destined to repeat the success of F. M. Gardner's *Sequels*, and possibly also a new edition of that best-seller of a few years ago. Finally, those who enjoy reading S. C. Holliday's article in this issue of the *Library Assistant* will be glad to know that he has prepared an "English" version of that remarkable staff manual, *Patrons are people: how to be a model librarian*, first published in America by the Minneapolis Public Library.

So 1952 will be an important year in the history of A.A.L. publishing. Only the support of members can make it a successful one.

"Index to Progress."

The British public library service has received world-wide publicity as a result of the A.A.L. film, *Index to Progress*. Its success has far exceeded the expectations of the Council at its meeting in January, 1949, when the decision was made to finance the film. The United Kingdom Government sought, and were willingly granted, permission to undertake distribution at public expense through the Central Film Library to over 40 stations as far apart as India, Ceylon, Kenya and Jamaica. They are also preparing specially translated versions for distribution in Brazil and the Latin American countries. Altogether the Government are producing for free distribution over 100 copies of *Index to Progress*. In this way much greater publicity will be, and has been achieved for British public libraries without cost, but without financial gain, to the A.A.L. Nearly all comments received after seeing the film have been most complimentary and gratifying.

Copies are available for loan in this country either from the Central Film Library (Reference number U.K.1256), without charge, or from the Hon. Treasurer at the usual rates.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

How to be Brilliant and Successful

S. C. HOLLIDAY, *Deputy Librarian, Kensington P.L.*

DO NOT—according to your temperament—vigorously deny or blushing deprecate what I have to say. You wish to become a very senior Senior, possibly a Deputy, perhaps even a Chief Librarian. And you want to become known as an Authority on some aspect of librarianship or on a not too distantly related subject. You are wise to admit that the extra money lures you; otherwise, I might have waxed satirical at your expense. As you say—and you are too right—a chiefship is not only the key to a pauper's Klondyke but (wherever did you find the phrase?) it has also an inalienable coruscation all its own.

Well, despite your bad language (you never hoped to be a civil servant, did you?), I think I know what you mean. You want to feel able to walk in at Malet Place and shout: "Hi, Hutch!", "Ho, Charlie!", "Mac, me broth of a bho!" You want awestricken juniors to buy you large beers at the Marlborough while you discourse upon Ernie's latest windmill and what Berwick confided to you. You aspire, for you are already corrupted even by future power, to receive a passing nod from P.S.J.W. himself. I understand—though I am amused by your ambition—you want to be on the inside looking out.

Now it is obvious that I can't tell you how to get the *post* you want. The only advice I can give you there is to select some expert in jobbery (they are not hard to find) and watch his methods. You may be surprised and shocked at first, but you will learn a lot about human nature. By diligent study, you will find that only a short time will elapse before you, too, can crawl through the eye of a needle. You had better get some Association qualifications, though unfortunately they are not now handed round on a plate, as in the days not quite beyond recall. And you had better be educated, for—as you know—to obtain merely a junior's job in a lesser university library or a "senior's" post (at the bottom of the A.P.T. scale) in some obscure Midland townlet, you will need a good Honours degree, a sound knowledge of Aramaic, Basque and Cookkoo-oose and be able to write an essay (in Kharoshthi script) upon the left hind-leg of a Tasmanian Devil.

You *are* professionally qualified, and you *are* educated—even in the very matters I describe? That is most satisfactory. Now, sans fee, and with only your welfare at heart, I am going to tell you how to prepare yourself for Higher Administration, how to become a recognised Authority, and how to acquire the reputation of a Sound Man.

First of all, then, I will deal with Higher Administration. Here you will have to use some thought. Do not let me mislead you, however, for Higher Administration (let me whisper this) is just too easy. You could, if you were foolish enough, pore over the weighty documents prepared by the Institute of Management; you could develop a sad, strabismic condition by entering too deeply into the lewd realms of cost accounting, actuarial mathematics and budget forecasting; you could confound yourself with the problems of personnel welfare, with line and staff functions. You could learn to dis-

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

tinguish a therblig from a gantt; you could become word-perfect in the Acts of '50, '52, '92 and '19. Do not indulge in these evil things! To be Successful you must be Sound: you must therefore be *in line with the times*, or—far better—fifty years behind them.

The best method of preparing yourself for Higher Administration is not to prepare yourself at all. Instead, you've got to prove yourself *capable* of H.A. There are ways of doing this. The most obvious—for a junior struggling to lift himself from the mire by his bootlickings—is to go to his Chief and say—frankly—"Out! I need the experience and you need a rest. Clear off for a month or two. I'll cope."

This course of action gives rise to occasional difficulties, and I will therefore describe a method that has less chance of failure. Don't attempt administrative revolutions within your own library system. However earnest your efforts, you will be discouraged by the ribald comments of your colleagues. Instead, you must resort to literature. You must, in fact, *write*. To write for the library press you don't have to write very well. Indeed, it is most inadvisable to do so. If you do, and one of the Brigade of Old Guards sees a sentence containing subject, predicate, verb and what have you in correct and apple-pie order, he will snort: "Huh, a wise guy!" and you've lost a point. You see, then, that you've got to develop the common, the very common, touch. And for heaven's sake, don't be facetious. Librarianship is a solemn subject—as the Australians would say, a proper Sacred Cow—and you must be serious, dead serious, the deader the better.

But what to write about?—ah, here's where I can really help! You've got to choose a subject that can be appreciated by, and is well within the understanding of all administrators. You will start with your first little essay—"Correct and Incorrect Methods of Tearing-off Fine Tickets." No Editor will dare reject it. It is, and always has been, a matter of moment. If your essay is sufficiently ungrammatical, and if you conclude with a peroration to the effect that the counter—nay, the fine-roll—is the heart of bibliography, then your article will be read, digested and discussed the length and breadth of the land. Overnight, you will find that you are (not yet a Sound) a Coming Man. True, someone in the British Museum or Library of Congress may die of apoplexy, but pay no attention—they do that all the time.

The *succès fou* of this essay will almost certainly get you a new job—and—well, here you are, positively leaping up the ladder. Don't worry about Higher Administration any more: you're there, you've done it.

Right. Now for stage two—Soundness. It's simple. You allow a decent, though quite short, interval to elapse, and you slip in your second article. Another subject? Oh, dear me, no! You write, a bit longer, a lot more portentously, your passport to unshakeable esteem: "The Fine Ticket: colour, proportion, perforation."

That's it, my dear chap. Ten minutes after publication, there'll be a letter in the post for you, inviting you to sit (they may even offer you the chair) on a UNESCO committee. Your mail will become a nuisance. They'll want you for a main paper on petty cash at the next Conference, you'll be asked to represent the L.A. on the Standing Commission of Railway Clerks and Cinema Usherettes, and your swift election as a Research Fellow of Chaucer House will be a mere formality.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

The transition from Soundness to Authoritativeness is now only a matter of time and ink. Meanwhile, you should exercise craft, and slightly extend your field by writing a severely technical article: "Standards for the Design of Fine-Roll Boxes." When this is printed, you will be recognised as sounder than Sound—as an All-Round Man.

Your moment has come. You have laboured greatly, you have sent questionnaires all over, you have compared, contrasted, tabulated and documented. And with a thrill of personal satisfaction in a job well done, you write the last word of the work that will seal your career: "The Fine Ticket—What of the Future?"

After that, grand occasions only. And when they put the Presidential chain round your neck, perhaps you'll spare a thought for your mentor, who will be there in the background, smirking.

The Shop Window and the Public Library

G. J. WOOD, *Otley Branch, West Riding Co.L.*

A BRANCH Library in shop premises is thrust into the heart of commercial competition. Such a branch, unless it is to remain completely unnoticed, must have window displays at least as good as the best in the town. This is a matter of elementary psychology which can easily be checked by anyone after brief observation in his own town. A librarian of a shop branch is therefore faced with a responsibility and an opportunity of a kind his more orthodox colleagues do not normally meet. He must keep his branch in full view of the public by using the windows; he must show that the library is proud of the service it gives and that what it has to offer is good. Such a branch is on show all the time and cannot hide behind ornamental gardens and imposing facades; if he is successful it will be immediately apparent. Passers-by will cluster round the windows. People will cross from the other side of the road to have a closer look. Children will stop and cause their parents to stop every time they pass. Children are particularly important in this work; attract the children and the rest of the town will soon be made aware of the display. Above all, the fruit of success is a steady stream of new borrowers.

The first purpose of window display is therefore to attract attention. Unless people look in the windows in the first place, whatever is displayed there cannot influence them at all. For this reason I shall discuss layout and arrangement before dealing with the bibliographic content of the display. Each display must be individual. It must be different in its method of presentation from the displays preceding and following it. Each display must form a unified whole welded together by subject, arrangement and colour. Unity can be obtained by having a climax of arrangement culminating in the most important feature of the display. The object at this focal point may be bibliographical, pictorial or material as will be elaborated later in this article. Whenever possible colours appropriate to the subject of the display should be used for dressing the window. Certain colours are associated in the mind with particular subjects, as for example red and white with medicine and hospitals. The limitations of the window space available with regard to shape and size must be borne in mind. Large windows call for

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

big, bold displays, very small windows should be scenes in miniature. It is possible sometimes to amalgamate these two methods and insert a miniature scene within the framework of a large display. Though such a layout can be extremely effective it is difficult to apply and should not be attempted lightly. Above all the librarian must continually endeavour to supplement his own limited resources by every legitimate means his imagination can suggest.

Qualities to be aimed at in planning a display are visibility, originality and attractiveness. The display must be visible. It must be capable of being seen from across the road and from down the street. The person making the display must build rather than plan. He must work in three dimensions, never just in two. Height as well as breadth and depth must be given to the display by using boxes and other suitable supports of various sizes appropriate to the arrangement and to the window space available. Originality is more difficult to achieve. It must come both from the layout used and from other materials added to supplement and illustrate the books upon which the display is based. Other material can be pictorial—posters, maps, paintings and photographs—or it can be concrete—specimens relating to the subject displayed. This latter class covers a very wide range of objects and gives scope to the window dresser limited only by the breadth of his imagination, his powers of persuading outside agencies to contribute to his display, the tolerance of the library authority and the window space available. In the case of the present writer, stuffed birds and eggs, trays of butterflies, a fireman's helmet, hospital equipment and a cinema projector are some items which have featured in displays. In this connection the outside agencies concerned all contributed gladly without asking for direct publicity in return. For those with sufficient time at their disposal, simple models can often be made and can prove very attractive. The importance of non-bibliographic material cannot be over-emphasised. People are used to seeing books in a library. Things other than books appearing there make them stop and look to see why. This type of material has an arresting characteristic when properly used and can often give unity to the whole display. Attractiveness is an elusive quality and is found by all the parts of a display fortuitously combining to make an integrated artistic whole. It cannot always be achieved by well directed effort alone. A good sound effective display is easy but a really attractive display can be made only occasionally by most of us. It is born from inspiration and gives the same satisfaction to the creator as a work of art.

This article has dealt so far mainly with layout and arrangement, features which have much in common with window display generally. The second purpose of library window display work which must now be considered is much more closely related to the profession of librarianship. This purpose is to exert some influence on the quality and type of reading of our public. If we are not continually striving to create an atmosphere in which our readers can appreciate books of a higher standard than they would read if our influence was lacking, then we are short of idealism, and are betraying an alarming kinship with those responsible for the twopenny libraries. In fact we do not in that case deserve to exist at all. For this purpose general displays not limited to a single subject or form of literature should be avoided. Before choosing the subject of a display the characteristics of the

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

local reading public should be carefully assessed. There must be some latent interest in that subject among the people of the town to make a display completely successful. It is our duty to diagnose these latent interests, then by means of a forceful display to stimulate and satisfy them. Once such a display has been initiated and is bearing fruit the need to maintain a supply of books, sufficient to continue satisfying the awakened demand, must be taken into account by those responsible for book selection and additions to stock. It has been found in practice that a small branch can attract and maintain by these means a reading public, interested in a particular subject, which would do credit to a library serving a much larger population. To discover these latent interests the librarian needs to know well the community he serves. He needs to know the history of the town and its present economic and cultural background. Valuable pointers can often be obtained during discussion with leading citizens. If their true standing in the community is correctly assessed local cultural societies give very valuable indication of the subjects deserving attention. The size of the collection of books used in the display must depend on the population of the community served and the amount of response expected. It should never be less than two dozen books however small the public and specialised the subject. In most cases it must be many more and can include for the initial display at least a reasonable number of duplicate copies of particular titles. All the books in the collection should not be on view at the same time. A certain number must be kept in reserve to provide replacements for books which have attracted attention and have been borrowed. Any book in the display must be immediately available on demand. The whole collection must be representative of the subject chosen and should cover all aspects of that subject even though they may be widely separated in the library shelf classification.

In my opinion small authorities cannot carry out such a programme efficiently. A small library must start from scratch every time a display is prepared and once the display is over, much of the material cannot be used again. A large library system with many branches can circulate displays throughout all the service points where local conditions are favourable to that display. Much material can be prepared centrally and be made to serve a number of times instead of just once. The duty of the local librarian is to choose the displays he receives according to the needs of his public. He must also prepare local material in advance and see that successful displays are not wasted by faulty book selection and stock additions afterwards. It seems quite certain that the stock supporting a live display campaign needs to be large and mobile. Books must not be allowed to stagnate in one area of the library authority when they could be in great demand after suitable publicity in another.

Window dressing for public libraries has been neglected too much in the past. For this work the creative spirit of the artist is needed in a minor form as well as the specialised craft of the librarian. It offers us unrivalled opportunity for making our service known and gives us extra powers to influence our public. Let us be artists and salesmen as well as librarians.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Auckland's Pay Duplicate Service

R. DUTHIE, *Assistant Chief Librarian, Auckland, N.Z.*

HAVING read with interest the two articles on Pay Collections which appeared in the February and May, 1951, issues of *The Library Assistant*, I venture to hope that the experiences of the Auckland Public Library may be of interest.

The question of providing fiction in large quantities has exercised the minds of librarians for many years, but as long as this was a subscription library it was, for us, little more than an academic one. With the approach of January, 1946, however—the date of our change-over to a free public library—the supply of fiction became a practical problem.

Whether or not fiction should be provided was not in question, for the Auckland Public Library had for a long time made available to its readers a collection of fiction selected for its literary standard or subject matter. What was in question was the problem of how to supply fiction in sufficient quantities to satisfy the demands of new members who, we expected, would be attracted in large numbers by the free library service, without at the same time seriously reducing the amount of money that could be spent on books of more lasting worth.

A policy was formulated, the main points being:—

- (1) At least one copy (the first) of every work of fiction in the library should be placed on the free shelves.
- (2) For readers who wanted to obtain their fiction without waiting till the copies on the free shelves were available, current popular books and best-sellers should be duplicated according to demand and placed in a special collection. Certain works of non-fiction, such as light travel and biography, should also be included. These additional copies should not be a charge on the general book fund but should be issued on payment of a fee.
- (3) The same standard of selection should apply to books in this section as to those in the free section.

The result was the Pay Duplicate Collection, a distinct departure from the customary Rental Collection which has become common in New Zealand libraries. As the title implies, these books were simply duplicate copies of books in the free section; the difference was one of quantity (number of copies) not of quality, and books and magazines were issued only on payment of a special fee.

No attempt was made to compete with commercial book clubs whose books were generally of a different literary standard. We recognised that these clubs, by supplying large quantities of light fiction for those who want that type of reading, were really making it easier for public libraries to devote their resources to providing reading of a more worth-while nature, and it seemed quite wrong to us to try and duplicate this same service of ephemeral fiction, even if it could be made self-supporting by charging a rental fee. Instead, we decided to concentrate on maintaining and improving our literary standards as a bulwark against the flood of novels of indifferent literary quality.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Books in the Collection are distinguished quite simply. The letters "P.D." are printed in red on the location label and on the spine of the book, and the words "Pay Duplicate," also in red, appear on the issue label. Book tickets (a modification of the Browne issue system is used) are similarly distinguished by the letters "P.D." preceding the Class number. All books in the Lending Departments are listed in the public catalogues, but no distinguishing marks are placed on the cards to indicate which books, or how many copies, are in the Pay Duplicate Collection.

The Collections at Central and Branch libraries have a high turnover and, at Central, one side of a double-sided island bookstack (roughly twenty three-foot shelves) is more than sufficient to house the books and magazines not actually on issue.

Wherever possible, books retain their colourful dust jackets, suitably stiffened, but apart from this no attempt is made to "push" the collection. It is culled regularly and as soon as a book begins to "hang fire" it is transferred to the free shelves regardless of whether it has "paid for itself," thus helping to build up the free section at little extra cost.

The Collection is not intended to be profit-making or even self-supporting. In fact, it is doubtful if a rental collection of the nature indicated could show a profit if managed on strictly business lines with the Collection bearing its share of overhead expenses, administrative costs, etc. Books are issued for a fortnight at a charge of 3d. per volume and magazines at 1d. each. (At the time of writing a proposal to increase these charges to 4d. and 2d. respectively has been approved by the Auckland City Council and will come into force in September). The sum of £2,000 would be a reasonable estimate of the annual revenue from the Collection, and this is paid into the general library account.

The City of Auckland is in the rather peculiar position of having 127,500 citizens who are entitled to use its libraries as free members and another 200,000 citizens of other local bodies in and around the City, who have little or no library facilities of their own but may use the Auckland Public Libraries on payment of a nominal membership fee and a small charge for each book and magazine borrowed. Revenue from these reading fees and from the Pay Duplicate Collection are lumped together and it is difficult to give more than a rough estimate of the amount obtained from the Pay Duplicate Collection because no separate records of either finance or issues are kept.

The Pay Duplicate Collection has been in operation since 1946. It is an attempt to meet the problem of duplicating those books for which there is an immediate and temporary demand. It is an effort to attract and hold readers by supplying this demand without in any way lowering the standard of book selection. It is an experiment which has proved extremely interesting and, we feel, not unsuccessful.

* * * *

MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF LIBRARIANSHIP. It is hoped to form an Association of former students of this School. Will any students who are interested write to The Acting Secretary, Manchester School of Librarianship Students' Association, College of Technology, Manchester 1.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Outcrop IX

HAROLD SMITH, *Central Reference Library, Westminster.*

Interesting details of the Lenin Library, Moscow, can be found in *Treasure-house of culture*, by L. Solomyanskaya in the issue of *Soviet Woman* for January-February, 1949. Every seven minutes, a miniature electric train, which travels over sixty miles a day carries books from the old building to the new. The old building—formerly the Rumyantsev Museum—was founded in 1826 by Poytr Rumantsev, who left it to the State "for purposes of enlightenment." The Tsarist state, apparently not interested in enlightenment, added no new books and effected no repairs to the building. In 1862 it was turned over to the City of Moscow, but there were still no funds forthcoming. One book was added in 1864 and twelve in 1865. Now, however, both buildings house a collection of 12,000,000 items, comprising books, periodicals and files of newspapers. The reading room can accommodate 1,400 and the average number of people using the library daily is 4,000.

The aims of the public libraries in both our countries do not seem to be dissimilar. In 1913 Lenin (who in 1897 on his way to exile in Siberia had spent two illegal days in the Rumyantsev Museum) wrote that it was imperative to "*see the pride and glory of the public library not in the number of rare items it contains, how many sixteenth-century editions or tenth century manuscripts it has, but how widely its books circulate among the people, how many new subscribers it has enrolled, how rapidly it satisfies any and all requests for books . . . how many children it attracts to utilizing its facilities for reading.*"

The article contains illustrations of both old and new buildings, a corner of the reading room, and also of the children's reading room, opened during some of the most difficult days of the war, in May, 1942.

(Miss Norris Suthers, Westminster P.L.).

"In the year of 807 Ch'en Ching . . . made a proposal for the reorganization of the Chi-hsien Tien ('Hall of the Assembled Worthies'), a reference department which possessed a large library. His proposal included the restoration to the department of a class of official called 'Collator and Arranger' (chiao-li) . . . In 802 the Emperor asked a question about the original of the Palace Armies (Shên-ts'ê Chün) . . . No one at the Chief Ministers' office could tell him what he wanted to know. The question was referred to the Hall of the Assembled Worthies and answered in the fullest detail by Chang I (747-821), a member of the department. The Chief Minister Koa-Ying . . . was much impressed and is reported to have said 'They've certainly got some good men in the 'Hall of Assembled Worthies'.'" (Arthur Waley—*The life and times of Po-Chü*, 772-846 A.D.).

(E. P. Dudley, Hampstead P.L.).

Psychology at Work, Vol. 4, No. 1, contains an interesting article entitled *Problems of decentralization in a large company*, which is highly

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

relevant to library administration in the large county and municipal systems. The author discusses the need for, difficulties in, and advantages to be gained from decentralization and relates them to the need to get the best out of all staff at all levels in the interests of greater productivity.

(F. A. Sharr, Deputy City Librarian, Manchester P.L.).

An interesting account of Birmingham's local collection, giving a description of the scope, organization and work of a large local collection is contained in an article by Miss D. M. Norris entitled *Materials for a history of Birmingham in the Reference Library*, published in the Birmingham Archaeological Society's *Transactions and proceedings*, Vol. 66 (for 1945 and 1946 published 1950) p. 156-166.

(P. M. de Paris, Acting Reference Librarian, Westminster P.L.).

The Connoisseur for March 1950 contains an article by Cyril Bunt entitled *The golden age of Italian book illustration*, giving a fairly detailed account of illustrated books produced in Italy, from the Meditations of Johannes Turrecremata, printed in Rome in 1473, to the supreme achievement of the Hypnerotomachia of Poliphilus first published in Venice in 1499 with a second edition in 1545. Many beautiful books were issued between these dates, but the latter half of the century showed a decline, and the fine-art woodcut was eventually superseded by the less expressive technique of line engraving. Many illustrations are given.

(D. J. Foskett, Information Officer, The Metal Box Co., Ltd.).

Books for Students

COLLISON, R. L. *Bibliographies: subject and national*. 1951. (Crosby Lockwood, 18s.).

Although there is no reference to the librarianship student in its preface, this book is obviously going to be a useful textbook for the Assistance to Readers paper, since it provides for students' needs in a field which has not been adequately covered so far, namely subject bibliography. Most of the book is devoted to this, general and national bibliographies being dealt with briefly in three chapters at the end. Under each main subject heading, arranged in Dewey order, the principal bibliographies are listed and described: first, bibliographies of bibliographies, if any; then catalogues of older material, followed by current bibliographies and abstracts. The items are not numbered, but the author states that there are between four and five hundred. It is inevitable that there should be differences of opinion on the question of selection, but the various subjects seem to be fairly evenly covered and any errors are likely to be on the side of inclusion rather than exclusion. Certain sections are deliberately omitted, e.g., Christian denominations, individual trades and individual foreign countries. The last seems to be an unfortunate omission, as also does the absence of any section dealing with bibliographical series as such; for instance, the series issued by the Library of Congress, House of Commons Library and the National Book League, though one or two individual items in these are mentioned. The practice with regard to abstracts is not always consistent. For example, in

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

the medical section the only abstracting journal mentioned is *Ophthalmic Literature*, although medicine is a subject particularly well covered by abstracting services; the Imperial Bureau of Soil Science's *Bibliography of Soil Science* is included, but there is no mention of the other Imperial Agricultural Bureaux, which all publish abstracts in their own fields.

The descriptions are concise and for the most part cover all the essential points, though I could have wished for more comparative criticism, particularly with reference to coverage. It is not always easy for students to determine how "international" a bibliography is, or how much British material is contained in an American publication. There is no indication of the size of each bibliography either in pages or number of items. Actual errors of fact seem remarkably few. Two only are worthy of mention:—students would not necessarily know that the "Appendix" to the Bible section of the British Museum Catalogue consists of books *about* the Bible and is not an appendix in the ordinary sense; the fourth series of the U.S. Surgeon General's Catalogue was not "completed" in 1950, but ceased publication with the completion of the letter "M."

An unusual and excellent feature is the series of tables showing at a glance what bibliographies are available for the various branches of each subject. The book is well produced and pleasant to handle, but one cannot help feeling that students would have preferred to put up with less well-proportioned pages if the price could thereby have been lowered. There is an index of subjects but not one of individual items.

Mr. Collison speaks of "the sheer delight occasioned by a well-constructed bibliography" and one feels that he himself has collected bibliographies as another man might collect china. Here he displays his choicest specimens, pointing out their good (and sometimes less good) points to those not so well equipped to judge them. Students, not only of librarianship, have reason to be grateful to him.

J.M.H.

DEWEY DECIMATED.

DEWEY, MELVIL. *Decimal classification*. Standard (15th) edition, 1951. (New York. Forest Press Inc. (Woolston Book Co., Ltd.), £6 15s.

This edition of Dewey, long awaited, is largely an abridgement, with a few judicious re-shufflings and provision of places for selected new subjects. It is called the "standard" edition because, to quote the Introduction, "it aims to provide a system of classifying books, *not* a detailed outline of knowledge." The stream-lining of the schedules has been drastic: "the Tables, as they are developed in this edition, represent the Editorial Office's concept of what a medium-sized general library might need to classify its collection."

What immediately strikes the eye is the virtual six-figure maximum length of notation. Only very occasionally is a longer notation found. It occurs, we need hardly add, in the case of important modern subjects, such as radio broadcasting (621.3849) and jet engines (629.14353). To preserve the illusion of a short notation, no mention is made of the old familiar form divisions; there are no tables as appendices; geographical division (a notorious lengthener of numbers) is apparently only to be used where indicated.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Here and there the notation (not higher than the fourth order) is altered a little so as to give a slightly higher value to subjects of current importance. Thus, Aeronautics is 629.1 instead of 629.13. Accommodation is found for atomic energy engines at 621.48 and for the United Nations at 341.13. Significant "recommendations" are that 140, Philosophical systems, be merged in 180-190 (thus bringing 130 and 150 together); that material on 656, Transportation, be classified in 385-388 (a ruling long overdue). The preferred number for Finland is 948.95, under Scandinavia, not 947.1. 351.7-.8, Areas of Government administration, a source of previous confusion, is now dropped in favour of arrangement under the topic concerned. These are typical examples of piecemeal adjustment.

The decimation of the schedules is well reflected in the index. It now includes only 7,500 entries; the 14th edition mustered something like 65,000. This new Dewey tantalisingly halts subdivision at the brink of important foci. There are, for example, no individual author numbers under 820, English literature. Under 830 no subdivisions need be made: one *can* use literary form division, as in 820-828, and one *may* also use a period table thereafter, but A to Z author order appears to be the understood form of division. Under 553.4, Non-ferrous metal deposits, are listed thirty different ores, but no numbers are assigned: we are at liberty, apparently, to use A to Z author order under 553.4, or else A to Z order of ores. This last device is certainly usable at 709.1, where we may divide alphabetically by country instead of using the formal geographical divisions.

The editors of the new Dewey would seem to have taken to heart some of Miss Grace Kelley's strictures regarding the perils of close classification. It is all very well for Dewey to serve strange gods in its old age, but the sins of its youth persist unshriven in the 15th edition. Perhaps the two most aggravating faults of Dewey are the inadequate basic allocation of the notation and the scattering of related subjects. The earlier resort to A-Z author subdivision is merely an evasion of the main issues.

The British librarian will scarcely believe the evidence of his eyes when he turns to the schedules at 942. Only *four* places are given—for London, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, and Wales; 942 itself includes England, Great Britain, and the River Thames. On the other hand, each of the countries in the Americas receives provincial, etc., divisions. Have the users of Dewey found themselves irrevocably hitched to an American star? For the new Dewey would appear to place the onus of finding individual topics on the dictionary catalogue, leaving the British classified catalogue high and dry—unless British users revert to the 14th edition for detailed placings.

The student already knows how he stands *vis-à-vis* this new edition. The L.A. official statement is that the 15th edition will *not* be recognised as a permitted work for the purpose of Practical Classification in Registration Group A(iii), nor will theoretical questions be set on the new Dewey until 1952.

A. J. WALFORD.

ELLIOTT, CHARLES A. *Library publicity and service*. 1951. (Grafton, 15s.).

Mr. Elliott has compiled a competent guide which will be of use to students, but it breaks no new ground. He stresses that there are limitations

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

to library extension and publicity and rightly emphasises that the primary function of the public librarian is to provide and exploit books. But he is unduly magisterial in his desire to lay down a party line for librarians in relation to extension and publicity, and suggests that a common principle is desirable in the interest of public welfare and of librarians themselves. Unfortunately, Mr. Elliott's experience is limited and he tends to generalise from the point of view of the Metropolitan Borough librarians for whom it might be desirable to formulate a common policy. As far as the provinces are concerned, it is not practicable.

Mr. Elliott has taken as text for his sermon the statement in the L.A. Post-War Proposals that "the organising of informal educational activities is not properly part of the library service," and castigates "those wantons now sporting with the educationists and vying for nebulous favours." Having sported wantonly with informal activities for nearly 100 years before the Education Act of 1944 and ten years before the first education act of 1870, some libraries would like to regularise the union. And there are many who prefer the familiar charm of librarians to the locked embrace of the formal educationist, which is the alternative. But perhaps Mr. Elliott does not know of the proud record of some provincial cities in extension work and that this nearly always has a high book fund as a corollary. At any rate, he does not consider this record in his book; his point of view, if one may use the term of a Londoner, is too parochial.

In his chapters on bulletins, Mr. Elliott gives a competent introduction, but these chapters are not of much assistance to those who are actually publishing bulletins and booklists; these must go to the specialist literature. There are also chapters on lectures, gramophone record collections, children's library and on direct publicity. In these days of shortage of paper and of increasingly rigorous examination of expenditure by finance committees, it is not likely that many library authorities will wish to write personal letters to ratepayers and firms inviting them to use the public libraries. Even in more spacious days, experience has convinced many librarians that publicity material of this type is a waste of time and money.

G.C.

Letters from Members

RIGHT ROAD?

J. K. MEALOR, F.L.A., *Branch Librarian, Godalming Branch, Surrey Co. L.*, writes:—

It may surprise my colleague, Mr. Peter New, as well as many readers of this journal, to find that one of his cousin Branches *does* buy westerns, thrillers and romances, *does* reserve the new fiction, *does* duplicate (or triplicate) the du Mauriers and the Neville Shutes, *does* cater for poor as well as rich, old as well as young, low- as well as high-brow, for housewives and hobbyists and listeners to "Leisure Hour" or "The Critics" as well as undergraduates at Cambridge, and does, by any standards, do a job of librarianship which will bear comparison with the best. It *does not*—definitely does not—ever hear the complaints he refers to.

Nor do its readers—any of them—mistake either the Librarian or his

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

staff for clerks. We are all friends. The Library is a place where one likes to go because one can get satisfaction, whatever one's needs, whatever one's standard of education, whatever the length of one's purse, whatever one's mood. In fact, not only does this "free" service actually rival the subscription libraries—it surpasses them in almost every particular, and our readers tell us so. There is no money "wasted" on Collins' romances. On the contrary, the dear old Collins' romances are rarely enjoyed to such satisfaction by so many people, and if our lady readers take out a few cookery and knitting books, or a Lady Fortescue now and again, who am I to grumble at the swollen (?) non-fiction issues?

The truth is that for us there is no "sub-literature" problem. We don't buy erotic paper-backs or American "science fiction," and it is this stuff which is the real "sub-literature." Neither do we turn people away to wallow in the expensive cheap subscription libraries where the rather bulkier members of the same families reside.

No, sir. And another thing. It is becoming forgotten that in Libraries, as in any other social service, it is *people* that matter, and should come first. Our job is to deal with people who want books, yet it is significant that the first published statement on the humanisation of our Libraries should come, not from a Librarian, but from an Architect, Mr. E. Maxwell Fry (this journal, Nov., 1950, pp. 138-9).

Nor has the subject of "light literature" (give it its correct designation, please), received very scientific treatment, though Lord Russell, in his Reith Lectures, indicated the psychological point at which such study might begin.

Finally, sir, may I say that in my view, the right road for Librarianship is to be master of the job of being servant, counsellor, and friend of one's neighbours, the public, and to dispense one's knowledge, enthusiasm and book-fund to give a fair share of reading to all. Anyone going my way?

Miss U. M. GUEROULT, F.L.A., *Branch Librarian, Whitstable P.L.*, writes:—

"Library authorities could buy a small quantity of thrillers, romances, etc., for the exclusive use of such people" (old folk, unable to afford a subscription). Thus Mr. New, in the October *Assistant*—but he omitted to say how this exclusiveness is to be achieved. Labels in the books, perhaps, "For old age pensioners, recipients of National Assistance and undischarged bankrupts ONLY." Or the presentation of a birth certificate and proofs of indigence with each borrower's ticket at the exit counter? Neither of these seems quite certain to prove effective. A measure of individual means test would appear to be required. Enchanting echoes of counter conversations on busy Saturday nights suggest themselves. "A novel by George Goodchild, sir?—but that watch you are wearing is surely *gold*. Goldsmith, if you will—even Galsworthy, but if you wish to read *Goodchild*—fie, sir, pawn it and buy your own copy!" Or "Books on television? Certainly—you own a set no doubt? Then I fear the Susan Scarlett, which I see nestling beneath your arm, madam, is sadly unsuited to your social status. For television owners we provide Thackeray, Tolstoy and . . . Oh, hire-purchase, we-e-ll, in that case, perhaps I *might* allow a Thirkell." O tempora, o mores!

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Council Notes

COUNCIL met on September 20th, for the first time since its summer recess. The agenda was long, and contained more than the usual number of major and controversial items.

The Service and Conditions Committee received from Mr. Tighe the draft of his report on Welfare and Working Conditions of Library Staffs in British Municipal Libraries. After very full discussion, both in committee and in full Council, it was decided to defer the matter to the November meeting and to allow members to examine carefully both the report and the suggested amendments.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee, ever watchful of matters monetary, was concerned at the number of copies of the *Library Assistant* which were being asked for by Divisions in excess of their recorded membership. It was pointed out that the unnecessary expenditure incurred resulted, in effect, in reduced capitation grants, and Divisions were asked to make a careful examination of their membership lists, possibly appointing a membership officer for the task.

A special committee had met on the evening before Council to discuss arrangements for the 1952 week-end conference, and its recommendations were approved. A preliminary notice of the conference appears below.

A report on the work of the A.A.L. in relation to assistants in special and university libraries was discussed. Divisions were asked to set up sub-committees to consider the problem and investigate the local position, and to report their findings to the January Council.

In accordance with the usual practice of the Council, Mr. E. V. Corbett, the present Vice-President, was appointed President of the Association for 1952. He is succeeded as Vice-President by Mr. C. W. Taylor, of Yorkshire Division. It was also decided that the present Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, and Honorary Editor should be nominated by the Council to continue in office for another year.

ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS

THE THIRD

ANNUAL WEEKEND CONFERENCE

will be held at

BRISTOL

in April, 1952

The theme this year is to be

READING TASTE: ITS ASSESSMENT AND SATISFACTION

Further details will be announced later.